

# HURRICANE SANDY **REBUILDING STRATEGY**

*Progress Update — Resilience*



Spring 2014

---

**Credits for Images on Cover Page:**

Cover (Left) Photo: Levkr, "Road Under Reconstruction," iStockphoto/Thinkstock.com.

Cover (Center) Image: The Big U, Rebuild by Design Team, "The Battery Berms,"/Rebuildbydesign.org.

Cover (Right) Photo: Luvemakphoto, "After Hurricane Sandy: Ashbury Park," iStockphoto/Thinkstock.com.



# BACKGROUND

On August 19, 2013, the Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force released its [Rebuilding Strategy](#) for the Sandy impacted region. The Rebuilding Strategy included a long-term plan for rebuilding that guides Sandy Supplemental spending to drive regional coordination and make communities more resilient to future disasters. The Rebuilding Strategy also aligns federal, state and local policies to achieve seven goals that are important to the long-term rebuilding of the region in the most economically efficient, ecologically robust and innovative ways possible. These goals are:

- Promoting Resilient Rebuilding through Innovative Ideas and a Thorough Understanding of Current and Future Risk
- Ensuring a Regionally Coordinated, Resilient Approach to Infrastructure Investment
- Restoring and Strengthening Homes and Providing Families with Safe, Affordable Housing Options
- Supporting Small Businesses and Revitalizing Local Economies
- Addressing Insurance Challenges, Understanding, and Affordability
- Building State and Local Capacity to Plan for and Implement Long-Term Recovery and Rebuilding
- Improving Data Sharing Between Federal, State, and Local Officials

The Rebuilding Strategy identified 69 specific recommendations across these broad goals as well as specific member agencies<sup>1</sup> to lead the implementation of each of them. Since the publication of the Rebuilding Strategy, these agencies have continued to work closely together to move the recommendations forward and deliver on their commitments to the region and the President.

**This report includes an update on the implementation of one of the Rebuilding Strategy goals. This report is one section of a larger report that includes each of the seven Rebuilding Strategy goals and the internal efforts to improve data sharing and accountability through the Sandy Program Management Office (PMO);** recommendations are grouped according to these goals. This shorter report includes background information from the original Rebuilding Strategy, identifies the relevant leading agencies<sup>1</sup>, and includes brief updates on highlighted areas of progress made since the publication of the Rebuilding Strategy through the spring of 2014. Additional Rebuilding Strategy goal reports and a report on the PMO can be downloaded individually or can all be downloaded in the full report. A full list of the Rebuilding Strategy recommendations is included in the full report as an appendix to the report. To learn more about the Task Force or the Sandy Supplemental, to read the original Rebuilding Strategy, or to see the status of the Sandy Supplemental funding, please visit the following websites:

- Executive Order 13632, establishing the Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/DCPD-201200936/pdf/DCPD-201200936.pdf>

<sup>1</sup> While the Rebuilding Strategy identified specific agencies (such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development) to lead implementation, in some cases these leads have changed, or more specific subcomponents of or offices within an agency (such as the Office of Community Planning and Development) have been identified. Further, for some recommendations, the Rebuilding Strategy also identified contributing or supporting agencies. This progress report reflects the latest lead agencies only, and does not include contributing agencies, which in some cases have played a significant role to support implementation.

- Disaster Relief Appropriations Act, 2013, or “Sandy Supplemental,” which provided \$50 billion in disaster relief funding to Federal agencies: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-113publ2/pdf/PLAW-113publ2.pdf>
- The Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Strategy, published by the Task Force on August 19, 2013: <http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=HSRebuildingStrategy.pdf>
- [Recovery.gov](http://www.recovery.gov) Hurricane Sandy maps, for the latest status of Sandy Supplemental funds by state: <http://www.recovery.gov/Sandy/whereisthemoneygoing/maps/Pages/HudPmo.aspx>

# REBUILDING STRATEGY GOAL: PROMOTING RESILIENT REBUILDING THROUGH INNOVATIVE IDEAS AND A THOROUGH UNDERSTANDING OF CURRENT AND FUTURE RISK<sup>2</sup>

It is increasingly important to take advantage of the latest data and technology to measure and manage risk. Flood risk maps need to incorporate what scientists know about the pace and impact of climate change on sea level and other environmental factors. At the same time, the demographics of at-risk communities—which change quickly and dramatically due to rapid urbanization and shifting work patterns—must be understood. In the Sandy region, and across the country, communities once thought to be safe from risk are now beginning to recognize they face greater vulnerability to extreme weather and other natural disasters than previously imagined.

A robust recovery must use good data and science to inform decision making. Evidence-based information, risk-based analysis, and robust cost-benefit analyses could help governments, businesses, and homeowners better invest in measures that increase resilience on the national, regional, and local levels. The [National Climate Assessment](#) represents the most recent science on climate-related impacts that highlight knowledge for improved policy decisions.

## Lead Agencies

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)  
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)  
White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ)  
U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP)

## Progress Update

The Task Force announced the implementation of its first recommendation – that all Sandy-related rebuilding projects funded by the Sandy Supplemental must meet a single uniform flood risk reduction standard – even before the release of the Rebuilding Strategy. The standard takes into account the increased risk the region is facing from extreme weather events, sea level rise and other impacts of climate change and applies to the rebuilding of structures that were substantially damaged and will be repaired or rebuilt with federal funding. In October 2013, NOAA and USACE in partnership with FEMA, CEQ, and USGCRP, completed a resiliency recommendation by releasing the [sea-level rise viewer](#) which offers access to data and information about the risks of sea level rise, storm surge, and flooding along the coastal United States. The web-based map has the potential to help business owners and community planners build, retrofit, or rebuild in a more resilient way.

<sup>2</sup> Resilience is the ability to anticipate, prepare for, and adapt to changing conditions and withstand, respond to, and recover rapidly from disruptions. Disruptions can include deliberate attacks, accidents, potential threats, and naturally occurring incidents.

The last recommendation in this area was to create a competition to inspire experts from around the world to develop innovative design solutions for the region. Launched in the summer of 2013 by HUD and the Task Force, the [Rebuild by Design](http://www.rebuildbydesign.org) competition has produced regional, cross-disciplinary collaboration between state and local governments, international design teams, educational institutions, and the public.

After months of research and community engagement, ten Rebuild by Design teams unveiled their final proposals on April 3, 2014. The teams, along with hundreds of tri-state residents, local stakeholders, and government representatives, gathered to view the proposals. The resulting design innovations include growing breakwaters, the development of absorptive shorelines, off-shore islands, and regional tidal parks, and several proposals incorporate both ecological and financial resiliency. Winners have been selected and can be viewed at [www.rebuildbydesign.org](http://www.rebuildbydesign.org). Implementation of these winning projects will be undertaken by state and local stakeholders.

### *What this means for communities*

Federal investments in resilience measures means that Sandy-affected communities will be **better protected against future storms and rising sea levels**. The region will soon benefit from the efforts of **world class design projects** developed specifically to address the needs and risks facing these communities, and community planners and businesses across the country now have **access to better information** about future risks to help them plan for a stronger, more resilient future.

## For More Information

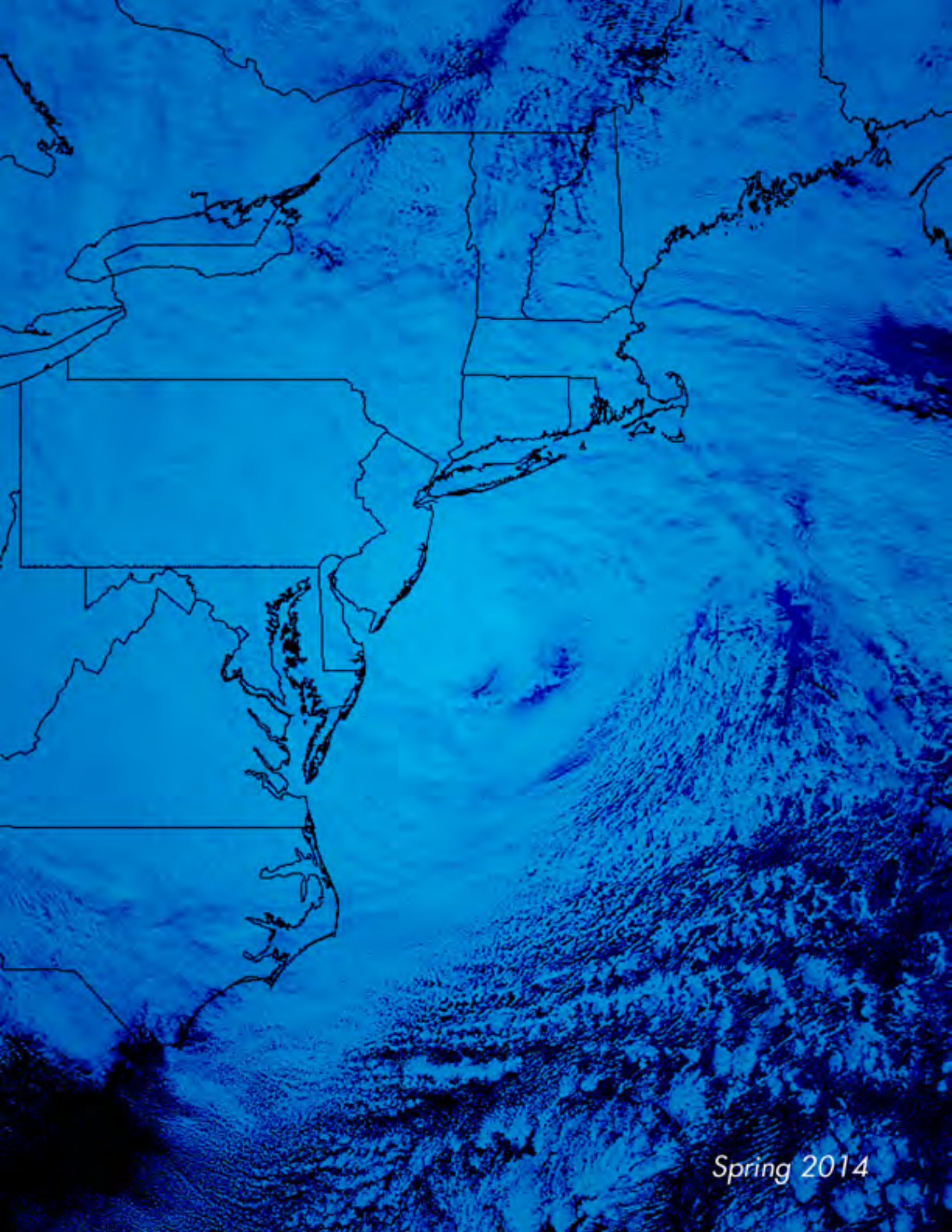
- View NOAA's sea-level rise tool here: <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/tools/slviewer>
- Learn more about Rebuild by Design here: <http://www.rebuildbydesign.org/>
- Learn more about the National Climate Assessment here: <http://www.globalchange.gov/what-we-do/assessment>

# RESILIENCE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE HURRICANE SANDY REBUILDING STRATEGY

*Resilience: Promoting Resilient Rebuilding Through Innovative Ideas and a Thorough Understanding of Current and Future Risk*

1. Facilitate the incorporation of future risk assessment, such as sea level rise, into rebuilding efforts with the development of a sea-level rise tool.
2. Develop a minimum flood risk reduction standard for major Federal investment that takes into account data on current and future flood risk.





Spring 2014